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LETTER

March 18, 1976

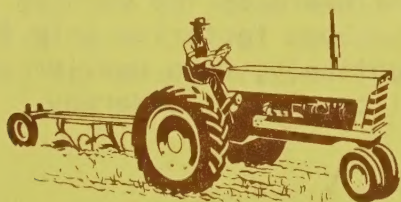
DEDICATION

We would like to dedicate this issue to outgoing chairman, Jimme Wilson. Jimme was appointed to the Montana State ASC Committee in March of 1973, and became chairman on Jan. 1, 1975.

Jimme has worked hard on the Service Center concept implementation, and has been in on the program since the first seven recommendations for Centers were submitted in June of 1974. Most of our county offices already had common housing, so the logistics problem in Montana was not as severe as in some other states. The advantages to producers of Service Centers was apparent to ASC, and we are proud that at this time Montana has 22 Centers recommended and 20 approved by Washington. Of these, four are completely operational, having at least 3 USDA agencies, and the other 16 are in varying stages of completion.

During his term of office we had two Livestock Feed Programs instigated because of severe drought, and a large Emergency Conservation Program because of spring flooding.

Through all of this Jimme enjoyed meeting the producers around the state, and we all enjoyed working with him. Rest assured Jimme will remain active in the many organizations he supports, and will be seeing all of you from time to time.



AGRICULTURAL FIRSTS

In 1612 it was found that tobacco could be profitably grown in Virginia... The Virginia Colony attempted in 1621 to stabilize tobacco prices by limiting production and burning surpluses... By 1639 production of tobacco in the American colonies had become so excessive that a crop-curtailment and price-fixing agreement was made between colonial authorities and the principal merchants... As rivalry over exports developed in the early colonial period of the U.S., the Virginia Assembly declared that importation or shipment of North Carolina tobacco from Virginia ports was illegal - April 25, 1679....



Binding spring wheat near Geyser - '41.

The first grain elevator was constructed in Buffalo, N.Y. in 1842... In 1813 R.B. Chenaworth of Baltimore, MD patented a cast iron plow with share, moldboard, & landslide in separate pieces so that

parts could be replaced... The first county agent was appointed in 1906 to do something about boll weevils which were destroying cotton in Texas... The first Congressional appropriation made specifically for crop & livestock estimates was enacted in 1865 & totaled \$20,000.

President Lincoln signed legislation which established the U.S. Department of Agriculture & created the position of Commissioner of Agriculture - May 15, 1862.

LOAN RATES, TARGET PRICES FOR 1976

Loan rates for the 1976 crop year are: wheat \$1.50 per bu; corn \$1.25; barley \$1.02; and oats \$.60. Anniversary loans, implemented in 1975, will be continued for 1976-crop grains. The interest rate for 1976 commodity loans, and on storage facility and drying equipment loans will remain at the current level of 7-1/2 percent.



Target prices for 1976 are: wheat \$2.29 per bu.; corn \$1.57; and barley \$1.28. As required by the Agricultural and Consumer Protection Act of 1973 target prices were adjusted to reflect increased production costs during 1975. Target prices are used to determine payments for these

crops under disaster provisions of the Act. Disaster payments will be paid to eligible producers who are prevented from planting a crop or whose yields are substantially reduced due to a natural disaster. Payment will be at a rate of not less than one-third of the target price for each crop.

Target prices are also used to determine payments made to producers on partici-

pating farms when the national average market price for the first five months of the marketing year is less than the target price for that commodity.

1976 EXPORTS

U.S. farm exports in fiscal 1976 may slightly exceed the \$21.6 billion shipped last year, according to recent figures. The Ag Department says the 1976 forecast of shipments is slightly below the \$22.7 billion projected last November because of a decline in price prospects.

Feed grain exports are expected to reach nearly \$5.3 billion, up 11 percent over last year. Combined grain and feed export values could reach \$12.5 billion.

Oilseeds and their products to be exported are forecast at about \$4.2 billion -- almost 15 percent below the 1975 level. Cotton exports could be about \$900 million.

Other U.S. export forecasts are -- livestock and their products, almost \$1.5 billion -- dairy, \$133 million -- poultry, \$190 million -- tobacco, somewhat under \$1 billion -- sugar and tropical products, \$500 million.

CANNING LIDS

Good news for the housewife? Well, anyway the production of home canning lids for 1976 will be almost double that of last year.

A majority of the canning lid manufacturers supplied figures indicating that more than 4 billion replacement lids will be available for the 1976 home canning season. This compares with just over 2 billion produced last year.

Lids are shipped to southern states first and move northward as the canning season approaches. Some factories ship to all sections routinely, with heavier shipments when actual canning is underway.

MILK SUPPORT

The support price for manufacturing milk will be increased to 80 percent of parity, effective April 1. This will result in a support price of \$8.13 per hundredweight.

The law requires milk to be supported between 75 and 90 percent of parity as the Secretary of Agriculture determines necessary. The level is subject to quarterly reviews and may be adjusted if necessary to assure an adequate supply of milk.

ROGER J. LEE

Most of you have already met our new state committeeman, Roger Lee.

Roger lives in Wolf Point and operates a 3300 acre dryland farm and grazes an additional 1600 acres in Roosevelt County. A veteran of 28 years of diversified farming, Roger has served on the boards of directors of both the Roosevelt County and Montana Farm Bureau, and is currently the president of the

Wolf Point city council. He has previously served on community and county ASC committees.

WATERBANK

A Water Bank Program that aims at helping preserve waterfowl habitat has been funded at \$504,000 for use in Montana during 1976.

The program was first conducted in 1972. Its aim is to maintain wetlands & provide more habitat for nesting & brooding for migratory waterfowl.



Thomas Jefferson

Scientific Agriculturalist

Thomas Jefferson, framer of the Declaration of Independence, Revolutionary leader and third President of the United States, has the added distinction of being one of the first great pioneers in scientific farming.

Having served his country in various appointive and elective offices for most of his life, Jefferson, a man in his middle sixties, finally returned to his estate, Monticello, in Albemarle County, Virginia, to devote his life to agriculture and his inventions.

It was Jefferson's belief that the free yeoman farmer was the strength of the Nation, and the bulwark of economic well being and free enterprise. Jefferson took a genuine interest in the land, and his inventions of a seed drill, a hemp brake, and a threshing machine reflected his special scientific approach to agriculture.

Among the most important of his innovations was the moldboard for plows, allowing for better soil tillage. He was one of the first to import Merino sheep and to improve the breed in America.

One of the most interesting of Jefferson's agricultural ideas is his rotation pattern worked out for wheat, corn, peas, potatoes and clover. Even in his immediate area of central Virginia, the statesman-turned-farmer had seen how soil used to repeatedly grow the same crop, in this case tobacco, became leached and useless. Rotation of crops and experimentation with various means of fertilization led Jefferson to the conclusion that scientific farming methods could counter this depletion.

On July 4, 1826, Thomas Jefferson died, leaving a legacy of practical farming knowledge for those who would follow.

FORESTRY INCENTIVES PROGRAM FIP

Montana has received an allocation of \$41,000 from the current fiscal year appropriation for FIP. The program will be offered in Flathead, Lincoln, Granite, Powell, Lake, Mineral, Missoula, Ravalli & Sanders Counties. Cost sharing will be 75 percent of the cost of carrying out tree planting & timber stand improvement practices. There will be both annual & long-term agreements offered. The program has been offered for the past three years.

A TIME OF CHANGE

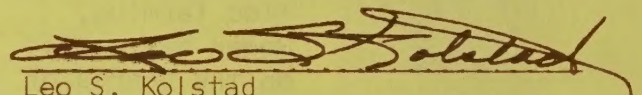
Excerpts from speech of Secretary Earl L. Butz before the Propeller Club Phosphate Night, Tampa, Florida- Feb. 17, 1976.

The last four years have been the most intense, the most exciting, and the most unsettling in agriculture. But as the young boy said when he peeked under the tent at the side show, "You ain't seen nothing yet."

To be blunt, we're coming down against it in the race between the stork & the plow... Can we produce & distribute enough food to generate the sort of happiness & satisfaction that will pro-

mote international political tranquility? ... We've gone from worrying about surpluses, to worrying about possible shortages. We are also slowly coming to realize that if farmers -- wherever they may live -- are to produce the food that the world must have, then they must be able to make a profit doing it.

Farmers must have incentives if they are to be able to take the production risks demanded by the call for increased food. There must be incentives for agribusiness people if they are to make the capital investments in plants & equipment needed to produce the added inputs that farmers will need --. .. "Allow for a slight improvement in individual diets, & by the year 2000 we must learn to feed as many more people as we've learned to feed since the dawn of history."...Somewhere between the extreme concern for the environment & for the need to double food production during the next 25 yrs there must be a common middle ground where both sides can meet... Agriculture can't stand still.



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